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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

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Bush Suffers Heavy Election Defeat in Virginia - Radikal
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HAMAS May Meet with Israel - Cumhuriyet
British House of Commons Rejects Blair's Terror Bill -
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Saddam Left Without Defense Counsel - Radikal
UN Calls on US to Remove Sanctions on Cuba - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

EU Releases Reports on Turkey's Accession: In two reports released yesterday concerning Turkey's progress toward membership in the European Union, the European Commission warned the Turks to step up the pace of reform and do more to protect human rights. 'Turkey can be regarded as a functioning market economy, as long as it firmly maintains its achievements in stabilization and reform,' the Commission said in its annual Turkey progress report. The report noted that the establishment of a market economy is a prerequisite for joining the EU, and will boost confidence in the Turkish economy, bringing a better climate for foreign investors. But it also said that the pace of reform efforts had decelerated over the last year, adding that human rights violations continue to occur, and that there is an urgent need to implement legislation. The Commission also acknowledged that torture cases are still reported in Turkey, and that more vigorous efforts are required to penalize those who perpetrate such crimes. It noted that problems encountered by non-Muslim minorities persist, adding that there is an urgent need to adopt legislation on minorities in line with the EU. 'Violence against women remains a matter of serious concern,' the report noted. It criticized article 301 of the penal code that was invoked against Orhan Pamuk, journalists Hrant Dink and Emin Karaca,

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and writer Ragip Zarakolu. The report added that the principle of fair trial had been violated in the Ocalan case. It noted that the procedures followed in the appointment of judges posed an obstacle to an independent judiciary. The EU saw little progress with regard to women's rights, pointing to domestic violence, 'honor killings,' a high illiteracy rate, and low participation in parliament, local representative bodies, and the labor market. It noted that laws obstructing the establishment of trade unions and associations should be removed. Papers say that the EU will closely follow improvements in these five areas. In a press conference announcing the reports, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said that a country with the size and population of Turkey is a major challenge for the EU's absorption capacity. Rehn also warned Turkey to abide by its obligation to open its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels. Rehn stressed that Turkey must ratify the additional protocol and implement it strictly. Rehn added that there is no link between implementation of the additional protocol and the removal of sanctions on northern Cyprus. Rehn declared that the EU has fulfilled its promise by kicking off accession talks with Turkey on October 3, and that it is now Turkey's turn. Papers say that the next two years will be difficult, and Turkey will have to work hard to attain its medium-term goals for economic and social harmonization.

Gul on EU reports on Turkey: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said in an evaluation of the EU Progress Report and the Accession Partnership Document that despite some 'unreasonable' criticism in the EU reports, the 'big picture' puts Turkey in an advantageous light. 'Even if we have certain shortcomings, the reforms we have enacted constitute a silent revolution,' Gul told a gathering of AKP members on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Ankara disputed the claim that it has slowed the pace of reform. Ankara also believes that the EU demand to open Turkish ports and airports to the Greek Cypriots is unjustified. The Turks are pleased, however, that neither of the EU reports mention a need to recognize Cyprus in advance of full EU membership. Ankara is also pleased that the PKK is mentioned specifically as an

obstacle to progress in the southeast. Dailies claim that the EU made no changes in the progress report in response to objections raised by Turkey.

US Consul Ried Visits Sirnak: The US Consul in Adana, Walter Scott Ried, told members of the pro-Kurdish party DEHAP that Washington will not support the involvement of the outlawed PKK in any efforts at a solution to Turkey's Kurdish problem, "Milliyet" reports. Ried met with Izzet Belge, the provincial head of DEHAP in the southeastern city of Sirnak on Wednesday during calls in the province. 'We will never accept a solution process tied to Abdullah Ocalan and the PKK,' Ried said, stressing that problems should be resolved through democratic means. Belge countered that Ocalan should not be disregarded, warning that the democratic process will be harmed if he is not taken into account.

Fried on Turkey, Islamic Regimes: Dan Fried, US State Department Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasia, said that the improvements brought by the ruling AK Party toward a center-right democratic course in Turkey are a sign of liberalization in the Turkish political arena, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency (AA) reported on Thursday. Fried told journalists at a meeting in Washington yesterday that the US will continue to support democracy in the Broader Middle East region. Responding to a question regarding the position of Islamic regimes, Fried stated that Islamic parties can advance on the path to democracy if they

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distance themselves from radical approaches.

US Report Mentions Bahais in Turkey: The 2005 US International Religious Freedom Report pointed to some restrictions against Muslims, Christians, and Bahais in Turkey for alleged proselytizing or holding unauthorized meetings, "Sabah" reports. There are approximately 10,000 Bahais in Turkey, according to the report, but they face suspicion and mistrust due to the fact that the Turkish state does not recognize Bahaism as a religion. The Bahais' Turkey representative, Suzan Merter, said that Turkey is the only country to reject Bahaism. 'We are not allowed to write Bahai on our identity cards issued by the state. Court rulings after 1990 allow us only to identify ourselves as 'nonreligious' on our ID cards. Such a wording has a negative effect on our children's morale,' said Merter. Turkey's Bahais mostly live in cities such as Antakya, Adana, and Iskenderun.

Nationalist Turks Protest against Patriarchate in Istanbul: Turkish extreme nationalists, accompanied by the Independent Turkish Orthodox Church and families of security forces killed by terrorists, gathered in front of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul early Thursday to protest against an invitation by Patriarch Bartholomew I to Greek Cypriot bishops to visit Istanbul to discuss problems among the Greek Cypriot clergy, the Anatolian News Agency (AA) reported. A spokesman for the group, Kemal Kerincsiz, accused the Patriarchate of attempting to establish a 'religious government' such as the Vatican. Kerincsiz noted that his group launched a signature campaign 10 days ago aimed at 'moving the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate to Greece, as it is acting against the Lausanne Treaty.'

Turkey Condemns Amman Hotel Bombings: The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) strongly condemned the terrorist bombings that killed over 60 in the Jordanian capital of Amman last night. The statement noted that Turkey feels 'deep sorrow' over the attacks, adding that the assailants must be brought to justice as soon as possible. 'The attacks staged in Jordan have once again showed the need for international cooperation against this global scourge,' the MFA stressed.

Ankara Urges Turks in France to Remain Calm: Dailies report that Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Spokesman Namik Tan said at his weekly press briefing yesterday that the Turkish

Embassy in Paris has condemned acts of violence in France and called on Turkish nationals living there to remain calm. 'Our nationals try to stay away from the riots in France, and are ready to cooperate with local authorities,' Tan said. Tan added that as the riots could spread to other European countries, Ankara has also called on Turks living elsewhere in Europe to remain calm.

US Source: Plame Visited Turkey Several Times: An unidentified US intelligence source told a "Hurriyet" correspondent in Washington that Valerie Plame had paid several visits to Turkey under the guise of an 'energy consultant.' The source claimed that Plame was working in a CIA department related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Plame allegedly visited Turkey along with nuclear energy officials from various countries, according to the report.

Barzani Advises Turkey to Launch Talks with its Kurds: President of the Kurdistan regional administration Massoud Barzani said that the Turkish government should acknowledge the existence of Kurdish people in Turkey and start talks with their political representatives, "Milliyet" reports.

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He warned that unless this happens, PKK violence will continue. Barazani also claimed that the PKK emerged because of the 'wrong policies' pursued against the Kurds by Ankara.

Religious Tolerance Conference Ends in Istanbul: The second Peace and Tolerance Conference, held in Istanbul under the auspices of European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Greek-Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I, and New York-based Appeal of Conscience Foundation President and Chief Rabbi Arthur Schneier, ended on Wednesday. President Bush had sent a message to the opening of the conference on Tuesday. The conference aimed at inter-religious cooperation for peace in southeastern Europe, the Balkans and Central Asia. Religious leaders brought together from around the world issued messages of peace and tolerance. Previous conferences had brought together religious leaders in Vienna, Istanbul and Switzerland. In 1994, the representatives adopted the Bern Declaration, which stated that a crime perpetrated in the name of religion constitutes the biggest crime against religion.

Erdogan on Foreign Investments in Turkey: 'Turks have more confidence in themselves today. We are working day and night to inform world leaders about Turkey,' Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan told a conference held by Turkey's Foreign Capital Association (YASED) in Istanbul yesterday. Erdogan said that full membership negotiations with the European Union will attract dozens of foreign investors to Turkey. He stressed that more foreign investment in Turkey will help create more jobs, and encourage competition to the benefit of consumers. Erdogan recalled that before the November 2002 elections won by his party, there were only 5,584 companies owned by foreigners in Turkey. 'In the past three years, the number of foreign-owned businesses in Turkey has jumped to 11,622,' Erdogan said.

Former DEP MPs Establish New Party: Former Democracy Party (DEP) lawmakers Leyla Zana and her colleagues established the Democratic Society Party (DTP) in Ankara on Wednesday, papers report. The co-chairs of the newly established party, former MP Ahmet Turk and Abdullah Ocalan's lawyer Aysel Tugluk, told a press conference that the DTP will work to find a solution to the Kurdish issue through dialogue. The founders of the party include former lawmakers Leyla Zana, Orhan Dogan, Selim Sadak, Hatip Dicle, and chairman of the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) Tuncer Bakirhan. The emblem of the party will be a red rose on a yellow background.

Arinc Criticizes Sezer Over Headscarf Ban at Receptions:

Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc lashed out at President Ahmet Necdet Sezer for 'denigrating Turkish women' by banning headscarves at gatherings at the presidential palace, papers report. 'I find President Sezer's illegal rules applied against the headscarf at receptions wrong, and I see them as a degrading treatment of Turkish women,' Arinc said. Arinc pointed out that Sezer's two predecessors, the late Turgut Ozal and Suleyman Demirel, imposed no such ban. 'After Sezer has completed his term, no president will follow such a practice. I am sure of that,' he emphasized. Because of the ban, none of the wives of Turkey's cabinet ministers attended Sezer's October 29 Turkish National Day reception. Sezer backs a constitutional ban on wearing Islamic headgear in public buildings, viewing it as a threat to Turkey's secular system.

Bomb Kills Two in Semdinli: A bomb explosion in a bookstore in Semdinli in southeast Turkey on Wednesday killed two and

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injured six others, papers report. After the blast, a group of locals tried to lynch a person suspected of planting the bomb. The group chanted slogans in support of the PKK, claiming that the car belonged to a security official. Police detained the suspect and seized three Kalashnikov assault rifles found in a nearby car. On Thursday, some 1,000 protesters pulled down power lines and set up barricades in Semdinli, and threw Molotov cocktails at a police checkpoint on the edge of the town to protest the bombing. Several papers claim that the undercover security officials are suspected of having played a role in the bombing. Last week, a car bomb was detonated in front of a security headquarters in the same town, wounding 23 people and damaging 67 buildings. The PKK was blamed in that incident.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Paris Burning

"Conflict of Civilizations is Underway"
Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in the mainstream daily "Hurriyet" (11/10): "The true explanation of France in flames is related to economic and social issues, because those who suffer from economic isolation and social alienation are one and the same -- Muslims. Continental Europe has been trying to overcome its economic problems for a long time. Decreasing productivity and a growing rate of unemployment in Europe are making things more difficult than before. Muslim workers from third world countries made significant contributions to Europe's wealth from 1960-1980, but their presence is perceived by Europeans as a thorn in their side now that European economies are no longer growing. As the pie gets smaller, the fight for each slice becomes more intense. . Unfortunately, this fight is also provoking a conflict of civilizations. This conflict is clearly visible when we see the difference in reactions between Muslim immigrants and East Europeans. . The events in France are very much related to Al-Qaeda, and must be taken very seriously."

"How to be Positioned in Europe?"
Soli Ozel wrote in the mass appeal "Sabah" (11/10): "The uprising in France is going to incite xenophobia in other countries as well, and will have negative effects on Turkey's EU process. Moreover, all of these incidents will make life difficult for the Turks residing in Europe. Turkey should be cautious in formulating its policies during this period of racial tension. It will not serve to Turkey's interest to filter political issues through a religious perspective. The problems of Turks living abroad should be viewed as a human rights issue and a problem of adaptation in the societies in which they live. After all, hypocrisy makes no discrimination. It exists everywhere in the world, both among Muslims and non-Muslims. The continuing silence of the entire Muslim world in the face of ethnic cleansing in Sudan's Darfour region is proof of this

fact."

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